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**House Committee – Natural Resources, Tourism and Outdoor Recreation**

**Honorable State Representative Frank Foster – Chairman**

Cc: Rep. Matt Huuki - Majority Vice Chair, Rep. Wayne A. Schmidt, Rep. Kurt Damrow, Rep. Holly Hughes, Rep. Joel Johnson, Rep. Peter Pettalia, Rep. Harold L. Haugh - Minority Vice Chair, Rep. Maureen L. Stapleton, Rep. Timothy Bledsoe, Rep. Dian Slavens.

October 18, 2011

**Subject: Senate Bill 248**

Dear Representatives,

The majorities of people in the State of Michigan recognize the enrichment that the land available for recreational purposes provides. Granted the current structure of public land access and utilization could be better, but SB248 may end up doing more harm towards benefiting those involved than good.

There is belief by some legislators that private ownership of land would benefit the people of this state more. This alludes to increased taxes which might be paid in the name of development as well as other interests private ownership deems necessary to value. These points alone has not made many allies of the public who love the land Michigan has for their use, let alone those outdoor enthusiasts who use this land extensively throughout the year.

There was also concern in legislature of full PILT payments being made to local governments. The passing of House Bills 4577 & 4579 this year will enable Legislature make annual appropriations from the Natural Resources Trust Fund in order to make full payments in lieu of taxes (PILT) on State-owned land purchased through the Trust Fund to local governments where said land resides.

The wide variety of outdoor use which Michigan public lands receive should have legislature more interested in increased public land as opposed to limiting it which SB248 in its written form dictates. With only 4 percent of the land in the Southern Lower Peninsula in public ownership, 16 percent of the NLP and 49 percent of the U.P. land under public ownership, that leaves statewide, about 79 percent of the land area which is privately owned.

Land parcels that the MDNR receive through the tax reversion process enhance the Department's conservation and recreation efforts equally of land purchased as the Natural Resources Trust Fund is designed to allow. Transparent goals for the sale of certain state lands that are not used or provide little or no recreational or natural resource value, would go far in the strategy of land use...as opposed to mandating a cap of public land that can be purchased.

With private land owners charging ever increasing funds to allow hunters to hunt their property under contract, state public land is the only venue the average hunter can look forward to utilizing in their yearly excursions outdoors.

The Michigan Bow Hunters Association working in alliance with other organizations opposes SB248 as written.

Respectfully,

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Cc: David Meade, Committee Clerk